spÃ¡ inn ofreflismaÃ°r

by Toreax

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Summary: "You are neither Human or Viking. I sense a soul of a Dragon, and a powerful one. You, Hatchling, are a blessing."

1. Chapter 1

I wanna see who the first commenter is from my other story, love you guys (^ o ^)

Thoughts and emphasis

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Hiccup had always been different.

Vikings. They were warriors. With big-boned limbs wrapped in large, bulging muscles and girths the size of mountains, he always compared them to giants. That's how he saw them. Quite literally.

Hiccup was stubborn. But he wasn't stupid. He'd never considered himself a Viking, or a warrior for that matter. He was like a toothpick, a splinter. He had long, gangly arms and legs that weren't larger than a simple twig. He had no muscle, only thin bones. He was short and small, only reaching any normal Viking's waist.

And he was awkward. Maybe it was because of his smile that looked more like a wince, or maybe it was because his large nose and crooked teeth. He wasn't sure what to do when speaking to other people; he didn't know how to communicate.

He was smart. Really smart. He created things, being a blacksmith's apprentice, and used that stubbornness to never give up on his work, even when everyone would crush down his ideas to dust.

He was clumsy. And his inventions added to that. Everything he made, it seemed to go wrong. It was sometimes because he'd screwed up on a screw or a bolt or maybe left that piece of metal over the coals too long, and sometimes it was something he did to mess it up, like aiming the wrong way or setting that on fire by knocking something over. And it happened a lot. He was infamous for how he messed up and caused people trouble. It was all by accident. He'd only wanted to help in the first place. But he tried to never really let words get to him.

And he wasn't sure where his motivation came from.

His father, Stoick, chief of his tribe, the Hairy Hooligans, didn't look a thing like him. He'd always wondered how they were related. They thought different ways, opposite ways actually, and talked different and acted different. Stoick was prideful, but he only did everything to protect his tribe and keep them alive, have it be trying to catch extra fish or taking time to fix up a house or two, or his overwhelming obsession with finding their enemy's nest to take them down once and for all.

He was a large man. Very intimidating. Fire-red hair sat atop his hair and grew into a long, stringy beard down his chest. With muscles as big as boulders and a stare as hard as ice, he'd been one of the best warriors Berk had ever seen. Rumor says he'd popped a head of a dragon off when he was just a babe. And Hiccup believed every word of it.

Hiccup, being different down to his heart, had never once been able to connect with his father. He was the village screw up while Stoick was the village's chief and protector. They didn't fit well.

So when he came barreling out of the forge with his new invention in clutch, he prayed to Freyja that Hel wouldn't come and release her wrath.

Immediately, every Viking that passed by him started groaning or yelling at him to get back inside to save his hide before he'd be sorry. They held pointed maces and sharp swords and stone hammers in their hands, waving them around with strength as creatures from the skies flew down to reach the yaks and sheep for their food. A few houses were set on fire, the blaze burning high as it spread over the wood. Stoick has going to have a real fun time helping build the lost ashes back up sturdy. The night sky twinkled with stars that just watched as chaos broke loose over Berk and the moon joined in, lighting up the shadows with silver.

Hiccup avoided anyone running past, nearly toppling over his large invention he pushed in front of him. His new (and improved) bola launcher. He'd put blood, sweat, and tears into it for weeks and now he'd finally got it to pure perfection. He accidentally knocked into someone and nearly ran into a shield-maiden. "Sorry!" he called. "Oops!"

"What are you doing out? Get back inside!"

"You little nuisance, get inside before you get caught!"

"Just let him be; maybe a dragon will carry him off!"

He kept running, feeling the wind against his cheeks and brush through his hair. Up the hill he went, out of the way of any Vikings and danger alike. Mostly. The forest towered behind him, but he slipped away from it to the ledge of a grassy cliff before any creatures could come out and bite his rear off. He snapped his hand down on the lever and readied the launcher, aiming it into the sky. He squinted through the target into the murky sky.

This was the time. The moment. This time he would do it. He owed it to his father. He wanted to make him proud, show him he wasn't a total screw up. To show he could be a warrior, a Viking, just like him. Show that he was worth enough to be his son.

This time he would finally take down the night furry.

It was a long shot, he knew. The Night Fury was notorious around Berk and the entire archipelago. Born from lighting and death itself, it struck like a slash of white and blue, never missing. It only came on raids when the sky was as dark as ash. It was lethal, deadly, and terrifying.

And no one has ever seen it. Much less killed it.

But he would be the first.

"Give me something to shoot at, give me something to shoot at," he mumbled over and over. If he could finally take down a Night Fury, he would be respected. He wouldn't be laughed or scowled at. He could finally get friends, maybe even a girlfriend, and his father would gaze upon him in pride and be proud and trust him. He could finally be one of them.

Boom.

A flash of a ball of glowing white light and blue exploding into a ring over the bell tower. It crashed into it and set fire all around. For a moment, he was worried about his father that was battling and cursing a Nightmare that had set itself on fire, a nasty habit of theirs. But there was a rebounding shout of "JUMP!" that was no doubt his father. He watched Stoick jump down, grabbing the Nightmare's extinguished tail and drag it down with him just as another shrilling whistle of the Night Fury burned itself into his ears and another shot took down the entire top of the tower.

Hiccup bit his lip in concentration. There it was. A black shadow against the blaze of light. It swooped, nearly blending into the background as the stars disappeared for not even a moment. And thenâ€¦he shot.

He was slapped backwards, falling onto his rear. A shriek of surprise echoed through the sky, but was drowned out by the sounds of violent battle. Only he heard it. He saw the unmistakable blur cry out as it descend to the ground. Hiccup's heart lifted so much as excitement bubbled to his chest and he cried out, "I hit it! I finally hit it! Did anyone see that?"

Whuff. Air blew across the back of his head. The excitement was gone and replaced with newfound fear as he whirled around, eyes wide. No. "Except for you."

The blood-red Nightmare crept towards him, its head cocked to the side. He backed away slowly, considering his options. Run off the cliff and die, or run forward and maybe live. Or maybe get eaten. His feet tingled as he went stiff. What would happen? Would his dad find his body? Or maybe his bones?

The Nightmare came closer, clipped wings with curled nails digging into the ground with weight. Its eyes were wide, so were the pupils. For a moment, Hiccup stopped and wondered what the dragon was exactly thinking. It wasn't attacking him. Then he stepped back and clattered into his contraption, the sound of metal on metal causing the dragon to narrow its eyes and roar so loud it rattled in his ears. Shit, he had to move.

With whatever chance he clung onto, he darted underneath the dragon, scrambling out from its side. The Nightmare seemed surprised, but it turned just as sharp as its teeth and launched itself towards him. He was already running down the hill for his life, barely managing to keep himself from falling off the ledge and onto someone's house. He could fall through and the Nightmare would definitely be able to come inside and have him closed in.

With a fearing yell, he jumped down and headed towards the water, wishing any of the other Vikings would take a moment from their own dragons they were trying to kill to kill his. He rounded around a pole that kept up fire for light and pressed him against the wood, fire cascading around the sides and heating up the surface. He breathed in a moment and peeked around the left, only meetingâ€¦nothing. The dragon was on the other side. But already his father's cry of rage was heard and he turned to see the dragon topple to the ground, rolling with the chief of Berk in a pile of muscles and scales.

His father fought hard. The Nightmare was already out of fire (probably the dragon that'd set all the houses on fire), and burped up some sparks that fluttered into nothing. "You're all ou'," Stoick growled, smashing his fist into the Nightmare's snout with ferocity. The dragon was knocked back as it made weak attempts to fight back. In the end, it growled long and hard, and took into the air with nothing, squawking for a retreat. The dragons picked up with their wings one by one, some with sheep and some with yaks or chickens, and swished through the air and into the fog.

The pole creaked and squeaked before thumping down on a smashed stump and fell over, taking down a fishing bridge with it, leaving Hiccup to only stand still and watch. His father was going to be so mad.

Eyes flicked over to him in conviction. He looked down to the ground as Stoick breathed a frustration breath, running a hand over his face. Before he could speak, Hiccup blurted out, "Okay, but I hit a Night Fury."

His father picked him up by his collar with one hand since he weighed as light as a father. "Wait, dad," he groaned. "It wasn't like the last few times," he cried. "This time I actually hit one! It went down by Raven's Point. If we get a search party over there, we can â€“ "

"Stop!" his father barked, dropping him to his feet. Hiccup stood

still, ignoring the annoyed stares he was getting from the other Vikings. Stoick's face softened into something tired. "Justâ€¦stop." He ran a hand over his face. "You do this every time you get out of the house, son. You can't just go running around with your faulty inventions â€“ "

"They're not faulty!"

" â€“ and keep causing havoc in the village!"

Hiccup looked down at the ground, glaring. "I was only trying to help," he muttered. He looked up again, pleading for his father to listen. "Please, dad, I actually hit one! I'm not lying!"

Stoick looked back to Gobber, his friend since childhood. Hiccup groaned. "Gobber, get him back to the house, and," he said in an accusing tone, "make sure he gets there. I have to go clean up his mess."

"Al'ight," Gobber said in a chipper voice, something Hiccup didn't appreciate at the moment. Gobber picked him up the same way his father had, by his collar, something both of them did to move him around. Hiccup only hung there with a scowl. "Let's get ya home."

They walked right past all the teens. Hiccup had never been a part of him. Since birth, he'd been to small and weak while they were all already developing muscles and Viking-like strength, so he was stuck in the house. Sometimes he'd watch them play outside with wooden weapons, pretending one of them were dragons, usually Fishlegs, while they all attacked them. But that was a time Fishlegs had actually been his friend.

"That was absolutely pathetic," Snotlout said, sarcasm dripping off his voice. Hiccup wondered how they were even related, even just a bit. His cousin slung a meaty arm over his bony shoulders. "Wow, I've never seen someone screw up that bad. Incredible."

"At least there was destruction," Tuffnut laughed snidely. "I wish I could do that, but I'd have to be a complete idiot."

"You _are_ an idiot," Ruffnut, his twin sister, said. Tuffnut rounded on her, spitting insults, while his sister just snapped back at him and then they were in one of their iconic fights.

"I'd like to see Useless â€“ " Snotlout was cut off by Gobber smacking him on the back of the head with the base of his prosthetic, his hand once taken by a dragon years ago. "Ow!"

"Keep movin', lad," Gobber said. "Wouldn't want ya to get in any more trouble, would we?"

Hiccup didn't answer. His dad never listened. Never. Not once. He knew he hit a Night Fury. He heard it. He saw the shadow go down in the woods.

They trudged up the hill, Hiccup frowning the entire way. He had to go out there tomorrow. He wasn't going to waste all his time and effort after he'd just accomplish something and let it get away from him. He was going to prove to his father that he could do something

right. He was going to kill the dragon. He had to.

"You can't keep going aroun' and shootin' stuff down, Hiccup," Gobber said from behind him. "One of these days you're going to kill someone."

"_I _didn't take down the pole," Hiccup snapped. "It was a dragon chasing me. And I actually did hit a Night Fury. I saw it go down in the forest." He growled to himself. "If only dad would listen to me we could kill it."

"Ah, don't be that way, lad," Gobber said. "You know how Stoick can be. He'sâ€¦got other stuff on his mind. Ya can't go making up makin' up gibber gabber to get his attention. Just talk to him."

"I _can't_ talk to him," Hiccup said desperately as they reached his house. "He doesn't listen to me. He only cares about those dragons. And I'm not lying!"

"You know he doesn't think that way."

"He always looks at me with that disappointed scowl," Hiccup said, kicking over a gangly weed sticking up out of the earth. "Like someone skimmed out the meat on his sandwich." He puffed out his chest, raising his shoulders, giving his best try at imitating his father. "What is this, ye? I ordered a big meaty boy with muscles and extra organs, but _this_! This is a talking fishbone!" His voice cracked.

"Look," Gobber sighed, tugging on his braided, blond beard. "You just have to not be allâ€¦this."

"You just gestured to all of me."

Gobber shrugged his shoulders. "Look at it this way: Stop trying so hard to be something you're not."

Hiccup's mind floated back to the Nightmare that had snuck up on him and caused the wreck in the first place. "Yeah, try telling that to my dad. Oh, wait. Don't. He won't hear you."

Gobber gave another long and hard sigh, waving him off. "Don't get yourself into trouble." He paused. "At least, too much trouble. Don't break anything."

Hiccup huffed, slipped into his house and closing the door softly behind him. He sighed, ignoring the smell of sulfur and ash that wafted through the windows along with the light of dawn.

He ran out the back door and into the forest.

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The forest was chirping with birds, trees every left and right. Sunlight poured through the branches and sat on slivers of ground. Hiccup hopped off a rock, mumbling to him. "Normal people lose some chickens are their hammer or something, but _no_, I lose an entire dragon. A Night Fury!"

Giving up on trying to map down and follow parts of the forest, he

snapped his book shut and tucked it into his vest. How could he have lost a dragon? This was his chance to finally make his father proud! In frustration, he slapped a branch, but it rebounded on his face, snapping back against his nose. "Ow!"

He looked up and stopped rubbing his red nose. A tree was split down, half of it leaning over in an arch, the top smashed into the dirt. His breath caught in his throat and he started running, nearly tripping his own feet until he got to a steep point that was almost his height. He peeked over and immediately ducked down as his heart jumped into his throat.

When nothing came over and ate him, he peeked up over the mossy edge. A large black figure was lying on the ground. It was motionless, so Hiccup took his chance and slowly lifted himself over and dropped to the ground, creeping over on hesitant feet. As he got closer, his thought of the dragon being dead flew out of his mind as he saw the chest move up in down in soft breathing. The scales were black as night, spotting over its head and around its feet. The skin was more like leather and no doubt as strong as Odin himself. It had stubby legs with a squared head and rounded snout. Bola ropes wrapped around its large, swooped wings that had to be at least twenty feet across. With a pounding heart that tried to beat out of his ribcage, Hiccup breathed one thing in awe,

"Night Fury."

He scrabbled in his vest and pulled out his knife. His attention flicked to its head again, and he was met with bright, electric, piercing green eyes with slit pupils that were as sharp as a sword. He almost forgot to breathe for a moment.

He saw terror. And he saw something sad. They almost reflected him. Something so scared and gripping pulled him into those eyes and stabbed at his chest. He'd never seen a dragon look that way. They were always looking at Vikings, or anyone for that matter, in anger and bloodlust. But thisâ€¦this was different. Never had he seen a Night Fury, but that didn't matter at the moment. Never had he seen any dragon look at someone, _anything_, with so muchâ€¦

Fear.

And he saw one thing that shook him to the core.

He raised the knife, sweat beating on his forehead, breathing hard. The Night Fury made a moaning sound that vibrated through the ground and shook Hiccup to the bone. Its eyes closed in hopelessness, head slumping to the ground.

He saw himself.

"I can't," he whispered. The knife dropped out of his hands and fell to his feet. "I can't do it." His hands shook. "I won't do it."

He grabbed the knife, nearly dropping it again with trembling fingers. He breathed in. And he started cutting the ropes.

The sound of rope snapping sounded as he hooked the rope echoed in his ears. He nearly fell to his knees his entire body shook. He knew, just knew, he was probably going to die if this dragon got up. But

his thoughts were so jumbled he tried to not acknowledge it. He would be able to save something that was just as scared as him. He tried to pretend he was helping another person.

As soon as the last rope split, Hiccup found him smashed to the ground, scrabbling backwards until his back hit a boulder. He bent his spine down as far as he could to shrink away from the dragon hovering over him. He could smell its breath, smoke and fish, as he pressed himself to the grass and rock. Its eyes were void of the hopelessness he'd just seen and replaced with somethingâ€¦else. Something Hiccup didn't know. Something cautious. But fear paralyzed him still as he watched, wide-eyed, with his heart in his throat and his lungs begging for air as he panicked.

The dragon watched him, the golden sun clashing against its black scales and skin. Its mouth opened, and Hiccup prepared himself for those sharp jaws to close around his hand as he tried to protect himself weakly. It breathed inâ€¦

And roared. Loud.

His ears rang and he tried to cover his head as his hair flew around his face. The dragon stomped once and turned, taking to the sky shakily, and flying away.

Hiccup watched for a moment, blinking, not sure what to do. He eyes stung from being so wide and he was sure he'd just had a heart attack. He got to his feet, swaying back and forth, taking a breath and grabbing his knife. And then he fell to the ground, groaning, and darkness came over him.

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Hiccup was still a bit surprised he was alive when he woke up. His arms and legs were still attached, along with his head. No missing fingers or toes. Nothing broken and nothing eaten.

Why had the Nigh Fury let him go? He was completely vulnerable. All dragons killed. If they had the chance, they killed you. This was a _Night Fury_ no less! It never missed. So why didn't it shoot at him? Eat him? Why didn't it do _something_?

Hiccup had no idea.

He slipped inside his house, wincing at the hinges creaking. He closed it softly and glanced at his father's hunched over figure by the fire. He crept over to the stairs and started crawling up as fast as he could.

"Hiccup."

He grimaced, halting in his movements. "Yeah, hi, dad."

Stoick stood up from his seat, turning to face him. He stood up stiffly, trying as hard as he could to not look suspicious. "You're back late," Stoick said.

Hiccup coughed into his hand. "Uh, yeah. Sorry. I was busy."

Stoick cocked an eyebrow. "Busy with what exactly?"

"Justâ€¦in the forge," Hiccup said simply, blandly. He had to go upstairs and think. He needed so much time to think. The Night Fury was whirling around his mind and he couldn't push it away.

"Good. It's nice to know you're keeping up with your apprenticeship." Hiccup almost laughed. Stoick cleared his throat awkwardly. "So, Gobber and I have come to a decision."

Hiccup didn't like where this was going. "But, dad, wait a second â€“ "

"Just hear me out," Stoick interrupted firmly. He sighed. "I can't 'ave you going around causing more chaos than needed, and Gobber's been a bit persistent. We've decided to put you in dragon training."

Hiccup ran a hand over his face. "Oh, Hel, kill me." He looked back to his father. "Dad, you have to understand," he pleaded. "I can't kill a dragon."

"Well, of course you can't!" his father guffawed, confusing him for a moment. "That's why there is training. You're only small and weak for now! This is only a phase. Killing dragons is in yer blood. You'll bulk up with muscle in no time."

"Oh, Gods," Hiccup muttered. "Let me rephrase that: I _won't_ kill a dragon."

His father, as per usual, waved him off. "Don't worry, son. Your doubt won't last for long. You'll be â€“ "

"Dad!" Hiccup said sharply. "I can't â€“ won't â€“ kill a dragon."

The nonchalant look on his father's face dropped. "And why's tha'?"

"I just â€“ I can't â€“ " Hiccup sighed, his shoulders drooping. "Dad, I just won't. Look, I'm sorry about the whole 'Night Fury' thing last night, butâ€¦" He bit his lip. He was going to sound like such an idiot. "I think I just imagined shooting it down," he choked out.

Stoick let out a breath through his nose. "Hiccup, I know you imagined it. There's no way you could have. And this thing about not killing the dragons; it won't be forever. You may think you can't kill them now." He chuckled. "But you will eventually. It's all just a phase."

Phase, Hiccup thought blankly. _It's not just a phase_.

"Dad â€“ "

"No, Hiccup," Stoick cut in. "You will be in dragon training. Starting tomorrow morning. And who knows, Odin may have given me a blessingâ€¦"

Or a curse was the silent finish.

Stoick cleared his throat. He reached over and grabbed a large sack and hefted it over his shoulder. "Al'ight, I'll be backâ€¦probably."

_Going to find the nest__** again**_. "And I'll be hearâ€¦maybe." _Not._

And with that, Stoick was gone. Hiccup didn't let it bother him anymore that they didn't say goodbye to each other, even when his father may be boarding the boat to his death. He didn't say goodbye because Stoick said that was for weak people who know when they're going to die. He sighed, and headed upstairs, not sure on how he felt on tomorrow. There was dragon training and then searching the forest to once again find that dragon.

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2. Chapter 2

This will not be a yaoi. You can go check out some of my other stories for that ;)

I'm going off the canon storyline, but I'm adding some twists. Beware, it will be darker.

There will be no character death.

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"Welcome to dragon training!"

Hiccup was nearly crushed as the gate at the entrance came crashing down behind him. Thankfully, he managed to keep in a surprised yelp, not wanting to draw any unwanted attention from the four teenagers and his teacher as he scrambled over to follow, clutching the axe he was barely able to keep in the air to his scrawny chest.

"I hope I get some cuts," Ruffnut said. "On my shoulder or maybe my lower back."

"And I hope you get your face bitten off," Tuffnut laughed. Ruffnut growled.

"It's only fun when you get a scar out of it," Astrid said.

Hiccup pursed his lips, not wanting to say something stupid to earn another insult. He looked around the arena. It was a cloudy day, not too bright, but not too dark. The arena bars curled around in various shapes and openings with rusted metal. The smell of smoke and dust that kicked up from their heels wafted through his nose. Everything towered over him and was so intimidating, it almost reminded him of the Night Fury he'd me â€“ (was almost killed by) â€“ yesterday.

Hiccup looked back and blinked when he realized Gobber was speaking. His teacher hooked his hook of a hand onto the lever of the cage and his stomach dropped so fast as Gobber began to pull it down.

"Wait, aren't you going to teach us?!" Snotlout cried, taking a step back.

Gobber smirked. "I believe learning on the job." And he pushed it down.

Shit was only Hiccup's thought as a meaty Gronkle bursted out of the cage. It fluttered around with small, bat-like wings, huffing and grunting. He was frozen on the spot, his legs refusing to work as he watched the Gronkle, feeling even moreâ€¦

Curious.

_Gods, what's wrong with me? _Hiccup begged through his mind.

"What's the first thing you need to do when you're about to face a dragon?" Gobber called out, picking at his teeth with his hook, looking bored, which made no sense to Hiccup as the Gronkle seemed to not notice him.

"A sword!"

"A weapon!"

"A doctor!"

"A shield!" Astrid called, turning on her heel over to the shelf of the steel-trimmed shields. Hiccup went the same way, snatching up a random shield, immediately holding it in front of himself. He darted back behind a large wooden fence (technically a hiding spot Gobber had put up (probably for him)). The sound of battle from the other side of his Elysium. Gobber started to quickly calling out names that were out right after the same sounds of battle cries came from teens. He peeked out, watching the dragon barrel into wood and send shots of lava to Viking that came close or came running towards it. The dragon looked almostâ€¦bored. Its eyes drooped and its body hung. Then again, all Gronkles looked that way, only searching for boulders to gulp down or grab a small fish during raids and fly away. But it looked scared to, its pupils slit down to pinpricks, just like the Night Fury, but not with the sadness and the acceptation for death.

It didn't want to fight.

He looked away for a moment, but that was all that was needed. Gobber picked him up by his collar as he was the last one going in the arena except Astrid. "Go get 'im, lad," he said.

He gulped. The Gronkle shot at Astrid, which didn't catch her but her axe, which sent her cursing as it was flung away from her. "Shit!" she cursed, running after it.

"Astrid, you're out!"

He gulped again. The Gronkle turned towards him. In all honesty, he didn't want to fight either. He just wanted to go into the forest to find the Night Fury. He held down his shield as the Gronkle came close, seemingly just sniffing. "C'mon, Hiccup!" Gobber barked.

The Gronkle shot forward and he could barely hold back a frightened scream as he was pressed to the stone wall. Once again, he was pinned and about to get his head fried off by a dragon. It puffed in front of him, and Hiccup shrunk in, holding his arms over his head in hopes to save some of his hide. The shrilling sound of a fire ball built up in the Gronkle's throat, and he could feel the heat getting warmer against his hands and cheek.

"Hiccup!"

And then the Gronkle disappeared along with the warmth, but the shattering sound of cement next to his head sounded, and he dropped to the ground into a fetal position as shards of brick showered over his him. The sound of the gate dropping closed and the snarling of the Gronkle stopped. Hiccup sat up, shaking off plaster and dirt from his hair and shoulders, standing shakily to his feet, wondering why he was suddenly a very interesting target for getting killed.

"Nice job, cousin!" Snotlout said mockingly. "I wonder if your little 'Night Fury' looked as scared as you did."

Hiccup scowled as Gobber swiped more dust off his head. "Try not to get killed next time, Hiccup," he said. _Wow, thanks_. "Remember, the dragon always, _always_ goes in for the kill."

He gave him a strange look, black scales and scared eyes flashing through his mind. _So why didn't â€“ _

â€¦

" â€“ you?"

Hiccup dropped the bola to the ground, stepping over the remaining, ripped ropes from yesterday's fiasco. Blocking sunlight from his eyes, he moved forward, following the direction he'd seen the Night Fury fly. He didn't understand why he was still looking; he just had this feeling that he should. A gut feeling. And he tended to follow his gut feeling no matter what.

He jumped over the stump and went to Raven's Point. Slipping between the rocks, he stood on a boulder that gave him a good view. The pond water glittered under the sun and fish swam happily inside. The grass was healthy and green, unlike the flat, stomped-on grass in the village. He glanced around, kneeling down on the sun-bleached boulder. Nothing. No dragon. No Night Fury. So why did it feel like he was being watched â€“

A large black figure whipped right in front of his face, causing him to yelp and scrabble backwards onto his hands as he caught himself from falling. The Night Fury turned mid-air and banked to the left, his wings wavering, sweeping down to the ground and trotting over to the pond, gazing into the water.

Slowing down his erratic heart, Hiccup got to his knees, pulling his book and pencil out with quick hands, and sketching the outline of the dragon. The Night Fury snapped its head into the water and came back up with a cod wiggling in its jaws. It lifted its neck, muscles rippling, and swallowed the cod whole.

Hiccup tried to not be scared, but it was hard. He finished drawing the last three bone ridges of his tail fin. He looked back, observing with a critical and curious eye. "Why don't you justâ€¦fly away?"

His tail fin caught his attention. There was only one on the right side, perfectly healthy and just _there_. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, on the other side. Just nothing. He saw the tiny lumpy bumps that definitely pointed to cauterization. Probably done by the dragon itself. Did he really cause all that?

He leant forward some more, but his hand slipped to the side, and the boulder wasn't underneath him anymore as he fell headfirst towards the ground. He managed to turn around mid-air to land on his knees and hands with an _oof!_ With horror, he looked up. The Night Fury was staring right at him.

He laughed nervously. The dragon hadn't attacked himâ€¦yet. That was good in a way. He leaned back on his heels as the Night Fury continued to watch him with slitted eyes. Its wings arched up and it crouched in a threatening demeanor, stalking so close to the ground its stomach skimmed the ground and the grass covered its mouth.

"Uhâ€¦hi," Hiccup waved shakily, not daring to move from his own spot. "D-Do youâ€¦remember me? You know, you almost killed me yesterday."

The dragon didn't move. It made deep, throaty growls that shook Hiccup's bones. But still. It didn't move. Maybe it wouldn't kill him.

He stood up. The Night Fury growled louder. Waving his hands in a hope to show he wasn't violent or looking to harm, the dragon made a snarling sound. He cursed mentally and reached into his vest. More, even louder snarling resulted. He quickly hooked a finger into the gills of the cod. "It's okay," he said, trying to keep his voice calm without quivering. "I'm just trying to help you. There's not a lot of fish in the pond, soâ€¦I figured you'd get hungry."

The Night Fury seemed captivated by the fish. It glanced up at him and then down to the fish. Down, up. Down, up. Hope settled upon Hiccup as it took a step closer to him. Its nostrils moved as it sniffed, then it backed away, only again, snarling.

"What's with the snarling?" he mumbled. He glanced down to where the Night Fury had its eyes set on: his chest. He reached inside his vest and pulled out his knife. It didn't like that apparently since it made a more vicious growl. "No, no, no, no, wait! Here!" He tossed it to the ground. It looked down, motioning its head for him to push the knife out of reach. He shoved his foot underneath, balancing the blade on his fur boot, and kicked it into the pond. Gods, why would he get rid of his only means of a weapon just to feed a dragon?

Just try, a voice told him. The dragon perked up, its pupils widening, ear flaps rising up like a feline. It lookedâ€¦cute almost. Great, now he was associating a dragon with being cute. He took a step forward, but the dragon's eyes narrowed like he was accusing him of something. Like he thought he was going to do something. "Here,"

he breathed. He held out the fish. "It's all for you."

The dragon didn't step for, so after a miserable moment of motionless silence, Hiccup tossed the fish softly forward. The Night Fury immediately grabbed it with its jaws, swallowing it in one gulp. It sniffed more, leaning forward a moment. "Uh, no," he said cautiously. "I don't have any more. That was all."

It sniffed once, almost like a sarcastic huff, and gargled a moment before turning and bounding away. Hiccup took a step forward, but its head whirled around to growl ferociously at him.

He saw the same fear.

So he left.

â€¦

That night, while the sky was dark and everyone was asleep in their beds, Hiccup slipped out his back door and crept down to the docks, swiping a few cod from their new catch. No one would notice the haul was so big.

He went to the arena, thankful the arena was far enough up the hill that no one could hear the gate to the dragons cages clatter shut. He went down the line, most of the cages empty except for four. One of every species that was mostly seen, including the Nightmare that had attacked him. They were all up and alert at his entering. The Nightmare was immediately snarling at him angrily, probably because he knew he'd been the one to get him stuck in there in the first place. Hiccup winced, but continued. The Nadder preened her sky-blue scales, ignoring him completely only glanced up as he tossed one of the cod into her cage. She immediately scrabbled over for it, seemingly forgetting her nonchalant attitude.

He went to the Zippleback next. Its two heads swirled from left to right, obviously expecting some food since the Nadder had gotten some as she squawked almost smugly at them. He gave them a cod and it both gobbled down, bumping its heads with each other as it tried to get the most share.

He got to the Gronkles cage. She was shifting side to side to get onto her belly and fluttered over, tongue lolled out as she stared at the fish with round eyes. He gave it to her, but she looked up at him before back down to the fish and slurped it up. "I'm sorry," Hiccup said. "I didn't mean to upset you today."

The Gronkle only made a whuffing noise before skimming her way to the back of the cage. Hiccup looked at the last cod he held in his hands and then at the Nightmare. The dragon didn't look to happy with lined eyes and smoke curling out of its nostrils. It wasn't shooting at him, so that was good. But it was obviously mis-fed due to the ribs beginning to show themselves through its thick skin. The muscles on its arms didn't seem as large. He didn't take a step forward, knowing he was as good as dead. He only threw the fish as far as he could into the cage. It went past the Nightmare, but the dragon was breathing heavily and still looking at him. "Sorry," was all he said before he left the cages in a scurry of small feet.

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3. Chapter 3

The title translation: Prophecy in Power

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The next afternoon, Hiccup sped his way into the forest with a large basket of fish and a curious head on his shoulders.

He knew exactly where he was going this time, so it didn't take him long to get there. He hoped he would be in high spirits after he was once again put down by Snotlout and his nasty remarks. He wanted to get a closer look at the Night Fury, andâ€¦well, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do, but hurting it wasn't an option.

Climbing over rocks and dirt, he finally reached Raven's Point. He thankfully kept a shield with him to keep him from running away, so when he crept inside, he lodged it between the two boulders he slipped past. He stood firm, barely creaking, and he slid down the boulder to the ground, looking around cautiously once he didn't see the dragon anywhere.

It came from the left. Hiccup barely had time to see the Night Fury slowly walk towards him, leaving at least ten feet between. It was in all its glory, yet looking a little less mad, thankfully. Black scales shining blue in the sun, its eyes stayed directly on the basket strapped to his back. It was all the fish he could manage to stuff inside without getting caught and put in trouble by any of the fishers.

"Hi, thereâ€¦again," Hiccup breathed. He raised his voice a bit, trying to not sound fearful. "I brought you something today." He nudged the basket off and opened it, grabbing a cod. "I hope four fish is enough for you, because I couldn't get anymore without being noticed."

He held it out. The dragon narrowed its eyes to pinpricks, haunches arching forward as it sniffed almost suspiciously. "I didn't poison it or anything," he said blandly. "I'm sure you'd be able to smell it."

It seemed to understand him because oh so slowly it leaned forward, closing their distance, opening its mouth. His brow stitched together. "Toothless? I could have sworn you had â€“ "

Teeth sprouted out in a flash and snagged the fish away.

" â€“ teeth." It tossed the fish up and caught it in its jaw, swallowing it whole. It looked back at him, pupils large and ears twitching upwards as if interested as it walked towards him, causing him to take a few steps back. "Wait, wait," Hiccup said quickly. He turned the sack over and three more cod slid out into the grass. The dragon made a crooning noise as if to say 'thank you' and sniffed them before devouring them quickly.

It looked back up, once again closing in on him. He wasn't sure what

to do. He'd only brought four. "I'm sorry. That was all I could get."

It didn't seem satisfied. Well, it looked a lot happier than it was yesterday. Still, it backed him up until his back hit a boulder as he slid down to the ground, realizing how familiar this was for him. "Wait! I - I don't have any more!"

The Night Fury sat back on it haunches, staring at him with an expression he couldn't decipher. Which was normal; as far as he could tell big pupils and ears pointed towards the sky meant a good thing and small pupils and a lot of hissing and snarling meant the opposite. It didn't come down and bite his hand off, so he was good so far. It made a strange noise, its eyes crossing a moment before closing and a rumble came from its stomach. Then it stopped its crooning to gag. Hiccup grimaced, confused and a bit disgusted. A half-eaten fish carcass slid down its forked tongue and plopped itself right in his lap. His first instinct was to toss it off without using as much of his hands as he could, because touching it didn't seem too sanitary, much less delightful. But the Night Fury caught his eyes, looking at him with so much expectancy that he found himself understanding he wasn't supposed to throw it away. But what else was he supposed to do with itâ€¦?

The dragon licked its lips, breaking the short silence of him laughing nervously about the whole situation. It looked at him, then at the fish, then at him. Wait. Did it want him to â€“

The Night Fury barked, a mixture between a loud gurgle and chuff. Oh man. He picked up the fish, trying to ignore the saliva that coated over the slimy scales. It seemed pleased by this because it watched him, waiting, smacking its lips once. Hiccup held it out for a moment. "A-Are you sure _you_ don't want it?"

It made a huffing sound, nodding its head forward to both the half eaten food and him. He had no other choice. Trying to hide the disgust on his face, Hiccup brought it up to his face, willing the smell to not enter his nostrils, and sunk his teeth into the pink, slimy flesh. _Ew. Odin, why him? _He held it out, holding the bite in his cheeks. "'Ere," he said. The dragon's ears twitched, and then it just gestured to him again. He grimaced, but one glance at the dragon meant he needed to swallow. Quickly holding a hand to his mouth so he didn't spit everything out, he managed to get the food sliding thickly down his throat. He shivered at the texture and just _grossness_ of it. He smiled a weak, crooked smile. "Ah, yeah, that wasâ€¦just delicious," he managed to say. The dragon ignored the fish, focusing on his mouth. An almost confused look came over its face.

Its lips twitched and quivered a moment, before they perked up into what could only be called a smile. Hiccup looked up at it, mouth bobbing open a second in astonishment. Its teeth were gone, only pink gums showing. It was a, well, a gummy smile. And probably the funniest one Hiccup had ever seen in his life. But he couldn't laugh, because everything was thick and tense as he scooched forward a moment. He kept his hands in his lap, afraid he would spook the dragon away, and tilted his head forward. "Would youâ€¦let me touch you?"

The gummy smile dropped as the dragon seemed to know what he meant,

or at least 'touch', and it shook its head, a very human characteristic if you asked him. He nodded. "Okay." Holding up the fish, he kept it under the Night Fury's nose. "Thank you for sharing, but I'm prettyâ€¦full. Would you like the rest?"

It gazed at the fish in an almost confused manor, which befuddled Hiccup. Why would the dragon not take up a chance for food? Especially when he'd brought so little and this was the only remains? It huffed a breath out of its nostrils, making a low trill and turned and walked away to a lump in the grass. It blew a small blaze of fire in a large circle, rounding around and plopping down, wrapping its tail around its entire body as if to protect. Hiccup watched for a moment, before creeping over and sitting right next to it. He gazed at the scales, wondering what it would be like to feel them. He held back a sigh, also wondering what is the Gods' names had come over him.

â€¦

"Gobber, do you know anything about Night Furies?"

Gobber looked away from where he was dousing a molded metal in the cauldron. "What's got ye wonderin' tha', lad?"

Hiccup bit his lip. He picked at the twine wrapped around the pommel of the sword he'd been working on. He didn't even try to lift it because he knew he'd probably go crashing to the ground along with the newly-sharpened blade, and he both didn't want to look like an idiot in front of his teacher _and_ ruin his hard work. "Um, I'm just curious. My dad had me read the Book of Dragons a while ago, and it had nothing on Night Furies."

"It may have nothing, but it's everything we Vikings know," Gobber said, running his hook through his blond mustache. "They are the spawn of lightin' and death. That sure is all I need ta know." He clucked his tongue. "No one has ever seen one an' came back alive. They never miss. And they kill."

Not all the time, I guess, Hiccup thought. Using all the strength he possessed, he tossed the sword with a struggling life of his arms into a pile of weapons he'd forged together in the little time he had before Gobber and he went over to the kill ring to start the next lesson. He remembered the look in the Night Furies eyes. "All dragons kill, right?"

"Well, o' course, lad!" Gobber exclaimed, exasperated, waving his hooked hand around in circular motions, as if that would get his attention. "Listen, dragons never, ever spare a life. They go for their target and tha beasts shoot or tear you apart before you can curse!"

"Yeah, I know," Hiccup mumbled. He actually didn't know. If dragons didn't kill any piece of meat or prey they saw, then what was he? What was with none of the dragons being aggressive? The Gronkle looked bored out of her mind while fighting four Vikings at the same time. Did she really want to fight at all? As far as he was concerned, the only thing he'd seen Gronkle's eat was fish and rocks. Even since he was a baby he'd never observed the dragons, he'd observed his dad to see what was to become of him â€“ even though that hope was slowly diminishing over the years. Even though he had

tried to shoot down the Night Fury, and succeeded, no one believed him. He'd thought he had shot a dragon down before, but it was a false alarm. That was all it took to have no one believe him. But after taking down the most infamous dragons they've ever known.

They wouldn't believe him even if he brought back cold, hard evidence.

"Alright, Hiccup," Gobber said, setting down the rod he'd just created, wiping off the excess water on a filthy rag. "It's about time we get 'a goin' before the other trainees wonder where we are."

_Where __**you**_ _are, _Hiccup pointed out, to himself, of course. He'd never say it out loud and attract unwanted attention towards him, especially from his teacher. Gobber turned around, his hanging belly knocking over the sack Hiccup had brought to his visit with the Night Fury in the woods. It plopped to the ground, the top stitching falling open. "Ah, lad, that's disgustin'! Toss tha'!"

Hiccup could only stare at the half-eaten fish that slid out, as if it was waiting for him. He'd never put it in the sack.

â€¦

_I always thought dragon training would be moreâ€¦instructive, _Hiccup thought for what seemed like the millionth time in those two days as the Nadder he'd fed last night hopped over the structures. She landed on the ground, her snout twitching as she chirped and tromped around on light legs. Her blue scales shined as bright as the sky above, yellow scales glinting from the sunlight all down her back and wrapped around her elegant tail. He bolted for it, stumbling over his own heels as he made his way through the maze, losing track of where he was going and where he'd come from. He could feel the _thump thump thump_ behind him from padded, clawed feet. He took a left turn and clattered straight into his cousin, who bumped into Astrid.

"Hiccup?!" Snotlout snarled, picking himself up on strong, meaty hands. Sweat beaded his forehead as he bared his teeth. "Get out of the way and let the _real_ Vikings handle this! We don't need your stupidity to get us killed!"

The comment didn't hurt him as much as it should've, because he could see Snotlout was probably eighty times less intelligent than him, knowledge and speed-wise. He turned and slipped right under the Nadder's rounded stomach. She looked a little more chipper today, with prancing movements and a more consistent bob of her head and twitch of her eyes than she did last night. Maybe it was the fish he'd given her. The arena dragons were rarely fed and it sickened Hiccup to see anyone treat anything that way. It was inhumane.

Snotlout called out something, a curse more likely, and the sound of his axe crunching into wood sounded from behind him as he sprinted the other way, not wanting any part of getting eaten. Just like Snotlout said, he would let the real Vikings handle this. He wanted nothing to do with it. He vaguely heard Gobber call something out to Astrid, something about a blind spot, and he heard light footsteps gaining behind him, no doubt with a dragon on their heels. It wasn't

long before Astrid ran right up next to him, her face as stony as any rock a Gronkle had ever eaten, before she turned right while he continued forward.

The Nadder swooped down in front of him, and he held back a startled yelp, skidding on his heels to stop his movements. They started running the other way, but it was only wall. He held up his (spare) knife, but it slipped out his hand (of course it did, at the most important time he needed it too) and clattered into the dirt. He laughed nervously. He was far enough from the east side of the cage so Gobber and the others that were called out couldn't hear him. "Uh, h-hey, girlâ€¦" He cleared his throat. "Remember me?"

The Nadder squawked, clomping her claws and flapping her wings wildly. She swerved her head down, her beak clipping from clapping her jaws together. She sniffed deeply at the air in his direction, inching closer until she was only a foot from him. He kept his shield in his hands, not wanting to get rid of his own defense mechanism, even if it didn't seem like she was going to attack. She huffed, trilling high notes in her breath, leaning more towards him, inhaling. "No, I don't have any more fish. Sorry."

She obviously lost interest. She turned, her large head whirling to the side just as Astrid came barreling towards her, axe held up and ready to strike. Hiccup saw the Nadder's eyes narrow before she let out a shriek and went drifting towards her, claws kicking up dust. Pressing himself to the side of a barrier, he stood and watched with his breath held deep in his lungs. He knew well Astrid could handle herself, but it just seemed so strange to watch the Nadder go from something so harmless, to something Astrid had herself thrown at with her weapon.

Astrid chucked her blade at the dragon, and it only skimmed her, chipping off a few scales, which the Nadder didn't seem to notice. Then Astrid did something Hiccup didn't expect: she slid under the Nadder's belly and right next to him, the exact move he had done just minutes before, but she just looked at him like she didn't see him there before. "Wait, Hiccup? What the â€“ "

The Nadder's head hit the barrier before she hit them. It went falling back behind, and the sound of wood scraping on wood sounded as all the structures began to fall like inevitable dominos. The Nadder repositioned her head, eyes straight on Astrid, and squawked, swinging her wing around. Astrid dodged it, but Hiccup wasn't too lucky as the jagged claw of the angle on her wing scraped his cheek. He just jumped away, swiping his skin and the little amount of blood. It didn't hurt, but the Nadder keened so high it rang in his ears. She acted like she was the one hurt as she collapsed forward right next to him, making a low rumbling sound that mixed with her trills, staring right at him with wide eyes. She wasâ€¦whimpering?

He didn't have to run before the last structure crashed down right on top of them. This time, he did make a loud bark of shock, rolling down to his infamous curled up position, hands-over-head, knees-to-chest. Crashing and screaming came from somewhere as dust swirled all around him and wafted through his nostrils and filled his lungs, and it took all he had to not inhale. He was going to die. He was going to get crushed and break something and then he'd suffocate for hours until he finally passed. So he waited, and waitedâ€¦

But nothing crushed him.

He still heard the trills from the Nadder. They sounded strained. Crunching started above him, and before he could crawl around looking for the dragon, a fist smashed through the wood and grabbed the collar of his tunic. More holes came and he was pulled through, coughing and wheezing as he blinked furiously to get rid of the dirt in his eyes. He inhaled gulps of fresh air, thanking Odin for still being alive. And the only reason he was alive was becauseâ€¦

"Hiccup!" Gobber called, right in front of his face. "Hiccup, are you okay?!"

"Stop yelling," Hiccup groaned, wiping at his eyes. The dust cleared and sunlight poured everywhere, lighting up all the teens and his teacher. Snotlout was looking away, while the twins were gazing at the destruction. Astrid was looking at him with that same stony face, but anger seeped through the cracks and he found himself shrinking away.

"Do ye need the Healer?" Gobber asked desperately, wiping the filth off his tunic and hair. "Tell me, do you â€“ "

"I'm fine," Hiccup snapped, pushing away. He looked back to the lump. It moved. "She's alive," he whispered to himself.

The Nadder burst through the clutter, trills flying and wings barely catching the air. She seemed to breathe in the fresh air as well as her rounded nostrils flared. She caught sight of Hiccup, but her twitching eyes slid to Gobber. She squawked and headed towards him, but the Viking jumped straight into her blind spot, all the teens scrambling away, and knocked her feet out from under her, slamming her head down to the ground. She made a low noise, and Hiccup could see the vulnerable flesh open from scales being ripped off harshly, something that the structure no doubt had done as it fell on her, or when she broke out. Gobber jabbed his knee up, kicking the Nadder backwards. Hiccup wrung his hands together as the Nadder yowled as she was locked back into her cage.

â€¦

Hiccup couldn't go to the cages that night because the trainees and Gobber were all having a small cookout on a large, steep opening that overlooked Berk, along with the arena. He would no doubt be caught. But he wasn't planning on going to the cages, anyway. He wanted to go see the Night Fury.

He was thumping around the pond when Hiccup saw him. Making wistful croons at the water that held no fish; he flapped his wings, and twitched his ears. When he looked up, Hiccup waved, sliding down the sun-bleached boulder that looked dull in the evening darkness, the moon lighting up only half of the cove. He swung around the sack, now holding more fish than he'd brought before, at least ten, maybe even more, and dropped it to the ground, cod slipping out. The Night Fury perked up, bounding over to them, sniffing, and then gobbling them up in only a few swipes of his mouth. Hiccup only sat down and watched.

Once the Night Fury was done, it looked up at him, but didn't sniff

him. Maybe he knew he didn't have fish, or maybe he didn't smell any. But he looked full enough with a bloated inch or so added to his belly, which had just begun to show ribs. Hiccup wondered how much dragons needed to eat to actually keep healthy and not show any bones. Ten fish apparently. The Night Fury had been here for a few days without much food and he was already degrading. Hiccup would change that.

"A dragon saved me today," Hiccup said pointlessly. He wasn't sure why he was talking. The Night Fury may not even understand him, much less care. But he didn't have anyone to confide in, and maybe the being he had been feeding would at least listen. "I had been feeding her and a few other arena dragons. She didn't attack me, but she seemed really angry when she accidentally cut me." He tapped the small mark on his face. "And the walls knocked down, and she let one land on her so I wouldn't get crushed. What's up with that?"

Maybe the Night Fury did understand him, because he cocked his head to the side, as if soaking up every word, ears twitching, and made a low rumble sound. Then he snorted, a short sided snort at that, and _rolled his eyes_.

Hiccup mimicked the dragon's actions, cocking his head to the side. "Can you understand me?"

The Night Fury puffed a breath, a higher croon sounding from his throat. Hiccup rubbed his hands on his knees, eyes wide in amazement. "So you _can._" The dragon nodded. "And you know what nodding is?" He sniffed. "Nodding. As in" - Hiccup nodding his head â€“ "yes." He shook his head. "And no."

The dragon nodded. "Do you have a name?" He shook his head. "May I give you one?"

The Night Fury huffed as if saying _go ahead_ and took a slow step forward, just feet from Hiccup, and sat down on the ground in front of him, tail curling around him. "Okayâ€¦" Hiccup pursed his lips, feeling the nervousness he'd been feeling seep out his pores like a waterfall. The Night Fury obviously wasn't a threat, and he didn't seem to want to hurt him at all, or use him as a chew toy, which was good. Very good. He pursed his lips. The Night Fury opened his maw widely, taking a large, cavernous breath. He yawned. Hiccup stared at the pink gums for a moment.

The Night Fury seemed amused. The teeth pulled back and disappeared into his gums within a millisecond. He puffed a moment, crooning, and set his head down on his tail, looking up at him, almost expectantly. Hiccup swallowed, settling back into his place and pondering. "Toothlessâ€¦" he said. "How about Toothless?"

The dragon chuffed, rolling his eyes. He â€“ Toothless, Hiccup corrected himself â€“ closed his eyes in content, like he was about to sleep. Hiccup sucked in a breath of surprise, sputtering out words, "Wait, wait!" Toothless looked up at him with an annoyed expression (apparently dragons could have expressions) and he twiddled his thumbs. "Um, I â€“ I just wanted to askâ€¦" He cleared his throat. "Why did you put that half-eaten fish in the basket? I didn't even see you do it."

He watched as Toothless hummed low in his throat, pupils wide. He

opened his jaws, and then smacked his lips. "You wanted me to eat it?" he questioned. Toothless dipped his head. "Why?" The dragon only purred and closed his eyes again.

Hiccup felt something stir in his stomach, like a strong pull that put him on edge, but at the same time, felt natural. He scooted forwards as silently as he could, swallowing thickly, and slowly reached his hand out to touch the creature before him. He held his breath as he almost pressed his fingers those shiny, silky black scales. But Toothless' eyes snapped open and he was to his feet, hiding his hand behind his back, and turning away. "Soâ€¦I'll see you tomorrow."

â€¦

4. Chapter 4

"H-Hey, girl."

Hiccup gulped, his arms pinned to his sides. The cages bustled with the breathing and rumbles of the dragons. The Nadder was hunched in the back of her cage, licking her scales. He caught sight of the small trickles of blood sliding down to the grimy stone below. He winced, and then yelped when a puff of air ruffled his tunic. He turned around to see the Gronkle pressed against the bars, sniffing intently at him. He tossed one of the fish in his hands and into the dragon's mouth. It caught it and waddled away. He tossed another two into the Zippleback cage, and the two heads snapped at each other for who got which. With one glance at the Monstrous Nightmare, who only snarled, he turned and picked at his dirty nails in uncertainty. He could go in, maybe get himself killed, or maybe help the Nadder, or he could stay out here and hope her wound doesn't get infected and kill her.

But he was stupid.

So he fiddled with the lock a moment, and opened the small door meant for delivering meals. The Nadder stopped her preening, turning her head to look at him, and still making that high trill in her throat. He got onto his knees, hunching his shoulders high to keep his body as small as he could and pushed off his heels, diving inside. His hair grazed the top of the rusty bars, but he passed by without getting hurt. But he did get a face full of dirt. Coughing and sputtering, he spat mulch off his tongue, shaking the dust out of his hair. He looked up, now fully aware of how close he was to the Nadder. She hadn't moved, but she leaned forward with her elegant neck, sniffing and batting her eyes.

"H-Hi," he managed to say. He got to his knees, leaning back on his heels, keeping the fish in a tight grip. "Um, I know you're able to understand me now, I guess." He scratched the back of his neck, surprised when the Nadder didn't react to his sudden movement. He held out the fish, taking a deep breath to calm his nerves. "Here. Eat this."

The Nadder grabbed the slimy tail with the beak and popped the entire fish into her mouth, the carcass swimming down her throat. He shivered, remembering how he'd actually eaten one _raw_. It still grossed him out days later.

The dragon sniffed harder and he shook his head. "Sorry. I didn't bring any more." She huffed and shifted a wing. He looked at her wound that had begun to swell with some more red. He glanced up at her, sticking his hand into his vest to take out a small bottle of salve he'd swiped from the Healer. Not one of his proudest moments. "May Iâ€¦May I take a look?" He gestured to her wound.

She chuffed as the other dragons shifted, almost hesitantly. Turning her head away as if she didn't care, Hiccup realized she was giving him a clear opening to help. He took the chance, slowly coming up to her side, glancing between her and the wound. It was a laceration, not too deep, but definitely a candidate for infection. There were missing scales all around it, some obviously torn in half. He grimaced. It had to have been painful. That was definitely from Astrid's axe, but the amount of missing scales was definitely not her doing. A piece of wood must have gotten stuck underneath the opening and took a few off when she lifted herself up.

Casting away the shaking in his hands, he got to work, pouring salve into his hand and mixing it with a few pain-reducing herbs. He quickly wiped away the blood swelling around, and just as some more beads began to emerge, he pressed his hand to her side. It wasn't like he'd imagined, but it was at the same time. Of course, there were scales and raw skin, but it was warm to the touch, but not as warm as being close to Toothless. He rubbed the salve around in soothing, circling motions until it started to dissolve, and even then he added more.

There was something wet on his cheek. A large tongue swiped over his skin where the mark was. He choked down a yelp and let the Nadder lick his cheek slowly, as if taking her time, trilling lowly and nasally. Then she stopped and laid her head down, letting out a large breath, and then closing her eyes. She was sleeping. He'd never seen a dragon sleep before, except when he'd cut Toothless off.

"May I name you, too?" he asked.

A drowsy trill.

"Your scales are beautiful," he said, running the salve over torn scales. "They are like the sky; bright blue. And your wings, too." He pursed his lips. "But you are veryâ€¦stubborn. How about Storm-fly?"

There was no response, and Hiccup wondered for the millionth time how anyone would want to harm such a beautiful dragon.

â€¦

When Hiccup came strolling into the cove, everything was normal. As normal as it had ever been. Toothless came trotting up to him, sniffing slowly, something he hadn't done in a while. Then he let out an ear-piercing shriek, wings flaring. He didn't have any time to react before he was picked up by the collar of his tunic and tossed into the pond.

He emerged a moment later, sputtering in shock of how cold the water was and that he'd been thrown in the first place. "What in Hel's name, Toothless!" he yelled angrily, treading water furiously to keep

him from going under. "What was that for?!"

The dragon didn't look too upset. He sat back on his haunches, only watching him expectantly as he paddled back to shore. Then he leaned forward and sniffed urgently, bring his nose as close to his face as he could without touching him, looking curious andâ€¦needy, almost. The smoldering anger that steamed inside him disappeared and he stood there shivering from the breeze that brushed through his soaked clothes. "Toothless," he whined, "look what you didâ€¦"

Toothless didn't seem affected. "Great job," Hiccup said. "Now I'm going to catch pneumonia and die." He huffed shakily. "More like you'll be the death of me."

The dragon chirped contentedly, rumbling low in his throat in question, as if he'd just realized Hiccup was complaining, and _why _he was in the first place. His roll raised in pitch as he cocked his head. "What?" Hiccup muttered, rubbing fatefully at his arms through his clothes, feeling his teeth beginning to chatter. "D-Don't t-tell me you thought that was okay." Nothing. He rolled his eyes, shrugging his shoulders and pulling his knees up to his chest, trying to keep as much warmth close to him as possible. "I-I'm _freezing_." He looked at Toothless. "C-Can y-you make a f-f-fire or s-something?"

Toothless gurgled in his throat and tromped away.

Hiccup sighed choppily, curling in on him, looking at his reflection in the water, wishing the sun would come out from behind the gloomy clouds. "Great. _Now_ I'm going to die of hypothermia. This is just splendid."

It wasn't long before heavy footsteps landed next to him. He looked over and watched Toothless drop a large pile of splintered wood onto the ground. "I d-don't even understand w-where you g-g-got that f-from," he said. The dragon huffed, and then gurgled low in his throat. Opening his jaws, a blaze of fire dipped down into the fire food, smoking the edges and bringing it to life. Hiccup sighed, inching closer and reaching his hands out as the warmth licked at his palms, his face lighting up in yellows and deep oranges. "That's so much better," he said. Toothless sat on the other side, tail curling around himself, staring at the fire as if proud. "Thanks, Toothless."

While he still didn't understand why the Night Fury threw him into the pond, he would take this as a sort of-kind of indirect apology. He snuggled closer, letting the smoke and flames roll through his senses and calm him down. He felt the thumps of footsteps before he opened his eyes. Toothless sat next to him, still staring at the fire. He was at least ten times Hiccup's size when he sat back on his haunches, wings splayed out behind him. He turned to Hiccup, and the latter looked at him curiously.

"You know you never got to eat because you threw me in the pond, right?" Hiccup thought it was quite appropriate to point that out. Toothless didn't look like he was starving to death anymore, but from the past week it seemed like dragons needed a decent sized meal to keep their strength up and fighting away bony limps. The Night Fury was made out of pure muscle, cords and pure power rippling underneath tough skin and scales. It was a sight for him to see, especially this

close. "All the fish are probably at the bottom of the lake." He scowled. "Why did you throw me in the pond?" Why? He could have just gotten a full meal and let him be, but instead, apparently, him in water was better than food.

Of course, the dragon didn't answer. He only looked over to him. Dropping down to his forelegs, Toothless turned towards him, opened his mouth, and breathed.

Hiccup gagged at the smell of fish and smoke. "Toothless!" he barked. "Ah, come on!"

It was like a replay of the pond. Toothless just sniffed him quickly, deeply, then sat down on the grass, and closed his eyes, getting ready to sleep. Hiccup sputtered, flailing his arms. "Really?" he said blandly. "That's it? You're just going to breath on me, make me smell like fire and fish, and then fall asleep? _Really_?" He huffed, turning back to the fire. "So passive aggressive," he mumbled.

â€¦

The next afternoon, Hiccup decided it was probably best to take a trip to the Elder's house.

It wasn't common for someone to do this. For Vikings that were in a serious confliction was best to go and seek what they actually were looking for. But it had to be important. Really important. And befriending a dragon, his kinds' despised enemy, was probably important.

He knocked on the door timidly. He'd never done this before; he knew his dad had when he'd first become chief. He'd heard the story many, many times, because he was the heir, and was to take over the village one day. But he didn't like to think about that too much.

The door creaked open, and even at his size he had to look down to see the Elder. With creaky legs, hunched stature, and wispy white hair, she was as old as wise. Even though he was expecting it, he was still surprised as she let him in, looking like she'd been expecting him, which she obviously was. He stepped inside timidly, wringing his hands together as he followed her to the kitchen which was clean and precise. She waved for him to sit down and he plopped into a chair, biting the inside of his cheek. The silence was killing him, but the Elder's vocal chords had withered away in time, and she was no longer able to speak. He was worried he'd say something dumb, almost wishing he couldn't speak as well.

She sat across from him with her cane, drawing out signs in the dirt she suddenly patted down on the wood.

What is it that you seek? She wrote.

He caught his lip with his crooked teeth, glancing away to the ground. "Um. I'm not sure exactly," he said quietly. "Maybeâ€¦some reassurance?"

The Elder nodded and hobbled over to a jar to which she plucked out a few sacks of herbs. She grabbed a scoop from each and drizzled them over the table, eyes narrowed and forehead crinkled in concentration,

which looked idealistic on her worn face. Dust flew into the air, and he blinked several time before tears came flooding, choking down a cough building in his throat. Once it cleared, the Elder blew lightly; casting more into the air, but some of the leaves and spices twiddled together like twine and wove into patterns. The Elder made a noise of confirmation.

_Hard times are coming your way. _She paused. _With rejection and fear and love, but all from different beings. Acceptance is something you've craved your entire life, but you will create your own kind. Your own you._

She stopped, and for a moment Hiccup thought she was done. But her eyes became cloudy as she suddenly looked off into the distance, staring at nothing in particular, but her hand still moving even faster than before.

A dragon's fire burns inside you. A fury of breath will save you and be your savior of blaze. A fight well fought with the sword of heart and the fist of hated trust. The Devil and the kin, both different, but same. Loved and loathed by separates. With the silver and the forest, heroes will fly and fall.

The Elder blinked, and on instinct, Hiccup swiped his hand across the table, tossing the dust about as confusion swelled deep in him. He knew the Elder couldn't see what she'd written. She didn't know what she wrote, the seer inside her taking over, and he erased that chance of her getting a glance. Because if she saw it, he knew something bad would happen.

He was out of his seat, taking in a shaky, deep breath, and thanking her shortly before he could ask more questions about whatever that was. Replaying the words in his head, he ignored the widened eyes of the Elder, and swiftly left.

â€¦

"Well, that didn't seem to help at all," Hiccup mumbled as he hefted a large sack of fish over his shoulder, moonlight pouring over his face. The arena came into view and he picked up his pace. "Now I just have more questions than answers." He sighed. "â€¦And an angry Elder."

He shook his head and entered the back of the cages. The dragons rumbled, although there seemed to be a rumble of hesitancy between the bars. He caught sight of the Nadder as he tossed fish into the Gronkle and Zippleback cage, ignoring the snarls from the Nightmare, and tossing two in for the moody beast. He climbed through the small opening, pushing a cod over to the dragon. She only stayed in place in the back, looking at him with large eyes and cupped wings. She stood on her toes like she was about to run, and his brow furrowed. "What's wrong, girl?"

He moved forward a bit, and she squawked. Stopping, he looked at her strangely. "You were fine yesterday," he mumbled. He peeked over to her side and let out a sigh of relief when he caught sight of the scales that had nearly healed already. Apparently, dragons healed really fast. He reached out, and she trilled high, leaned forward and then back again, as if confused. "Here," he said, crawling back out of her cage before he did something stupid. "If you don't want me in

your cage, then I won't come in. I was just making sure your wound was healing up fine. If it got infected, it would be _very _bad."

She crooned, coming close to the cage and sniffing in his direction. She huffed through the bars, her breath flopping his hair back. Pressing her beak through the opening, she sat still. Hiccup pressed the tips of his fingers to her snout. "See?" he said reassuringly. "I'm not going to hurt you."

She backed away and squawked, bounding to the back of her cage. He sighed and rubbed the slime from the fish off on his fur vest, then his eyes, yawning. "I've been going for so long, I really need to sleep."

He left the cages with crooning dragons behind him.

â€¦

5. Chapter 5

"_Dragonese"_

â€¦

â€¦

"Meet the Terrible Terror we just brought in last night!"

Hiccup held tighter to his shield, shifting in place with the rest of the teens. It wasn't that he'd never seen a Terrible Terror before, but just the fact that the Vikings had somehow _caught_ the small dragon and then put it into _captivity_ was setting him on edge. Biting the inside of his cheek, he took a step back.

Gobber pulled the short chain, a little slot sliding open. Everyone inhaled once sharply as silence between them settled into place. A little form slithered out, lime green scales lying next to vibrant red ones. Hiccup thought back to Toothless, how he was the emphasis in a painting, somehow his scales so dark they were bright.

"Ha!" Tuffnut barked amusedly. "It looks like the size of my â€“
"

The Terror lurched forward, claws latching on to his face as he cried out, "Get it off! Get it off me!"

Hiccup watched as the other teens ran around, Astrid towards the boy. He couldn't help but let out a garbled laugh that bubbled in the back of his throat. Snotlout was suddenly beside him, knocking him to the ground with a shove to the shoulder. "Outta the way, Useless!"

Tuffnut grabbed the dragon's wing, yanking the entire body off, yelling and scrabbling away. The Terror dropped to the ground, smacking its lips and swathing his left eye with a pink forked tongue. Its pupils flicked over to him, nostrils flaring as it sniffed his direction, tail snapping side to side as it lumbered towards him sideways, a low rumble coming from its throat. Hiccup

stayed still, palm right side up. But Astrid stepped over his arm, kicking out her heel and knocking the dragon away. It squawked, scrambling away from her and back towards Tuffnut, who screamed in terror.

Astrid turned on him while everyone was busy trying to get the dragon off Tuffnut's face. Her eyes were narrowed so thin Hiccup thought she was closing them. Forehead crinkled, he could see the way her jaw rotated as she grated her teeth. "What in Hel's name is wrong with you?" she hissed, clutching her axe tightly. "Are you just going to sit there and let that beast attack you? Are you _trying_ to get yourself killed?"

Astrid almost never said anything to him. She ignored the others when they teased him and she left when they started to take him lower with each punch. Stunned into silence, he sat back, hands tensing against the dirt in case she decided words weren't the worst punishment for him, which they were. He'd honestly rather her swing the blade across his head than berate him on what he'd heard so many times before. "He wasn't threatening me," he said quietly.

"In case you haven't noticed," she spat, knuckles turning even whiter, "that dragon was threatening you; it was coming towards you, you incompetent idiot. I don't care if you decide to let them eat you, but I do care when you get in my way." She flipped her weapon to her other hand, face still twisted in cracking anger. She turned. "Fight with us or leave, or so Odin help me with cutting that narrow-minded head off your shoulders. We don't want to waste any time on something useless."

She went back to join the others to get the Terrible Terror off the unlucky twins face, leaving him to stare at the ground. She seemed more narrow-minded than him, just like the other Vikings. Of course, he taught himself to try to not get upset from his title, but hearing it come from her mouth was ten times worse.

â€¦

Hiccup rubbed the sore spot on his gangly bicep from where Snotlout had socked him before he could run away. Slipping through the rocks, he hopped off the boulders and spotted Toothless slurping water from the pond. The dragon's head snapped up when he called his name, and he trotted over at the overwhelming smell of fish. Hiccup couldn't help but smile at the eager expression the Night Fury wore, less cautious than before. It was nice to know that he was finally getting more comfortable around him; he meant no harm, anyway. Anyone with eyes could see that.

Kicking over the basket, Toothless went at it, gobbling down as many cod as he could while the boy plopped down in the grass, lying on his back. Hiccup couldn't help but stare up at the sky with wonder, wondering how the clouds felt and what lied beyond them. Sighing, he asked, "What's flying like, Toothless?"

Of course, the dragon didn't answer, but his head did perk up, glancing towards the sky. The dragon did a roll of shoulders, diving back into the fish. Hiccup brushed his bangs away from his forehead. "I don't know why I'm curious. I've always had dreams about it. The sky, I mean. You know, when you feel like you're flying. But it _is_ just a dream." He let a small smile quirk his lips. "It would be cool

if that were real." He chuckled at his imagination. "As much as it would be amazing, it's also impossible."

He grabbed at a nearby branch, wrapping his fingers around the rough bark and holding it in an intricate position. With his special hold, he sat up, crossing his legs, and lazily beginning to sketch out an outline of Toothless. There was the rounded snout and flat nose, the perked two ears, slanted eyes, and thick neck. Scales were one thing, teeth were another. So he just left them both out.

It wasn't long before he felt a presence over his shoulder. A puff of warm air on his neck confirmed his suspicions. But he kept the stick moving, watching the shadow of Toothless' head follow every line he trailed in the dirt. There was another puff, harder, defiant almost, as if saying, _Yeah, right, I can do better than that._

Hearing and feeling the thumps of Toothless waddling away on his two hind legs, he turned after a ripping _snap_ sounded. The dragon had a branch the size of two of him nudged between his teeth, like a pencil. Toothless pressed the edge of it against the ground, moving around, swirling the lines into something random. Well, it looked random. The way Toothless halted one second, eyes narrowing on one little spot and then dabbing it as if to fix it said it was supposed to be something, an object or pattern maybe. He got up from his spot, now realizing Toothless was all the way across the swiveling lines, like at the end of a maze. Stepping forward, his toes just tapped the scoop of a line, but that was all Toothless needed to snarl. Startled, he lifted his leg up, hovering over it. Toothless stopped growling and began his normal, neutral, happy purrs. He tapped it with his toes. Growl. He lifted. Purring.

Finding a smile on his face, he stepped over the line, turning to make sure he didn't accidentally miss an open space. He kept walking over the lines, making sure his boots were as far away from the enclosed lines as he could and continued. It was only mere seconds that his concentration was pulled from him when he reached the end of the maze-like drawing, the waft of smoke ghosting over his shoulder and through his hair. He turned, face to face with the magnificent being with midnight scales and electric eyes. Something burned in his chest. Heart pounding, he took the chance to reach out slowly, wanting nothing more than anything in his life to at least touch, to show trust. In that moment, everything that once mattered to him disappeared. He didn't care about wanting to be accepted, or worrying about his father getting hurt or killed in battle, or how he was going to have to face dragon training the next day. It didn't matter.

But Toothless flinched back, dark orbs pinned to his hand. Hiccup realized he didn't know what kind of contact Toothless once had with humans â€“ obviously not pleasant â€“ not that he'd been expecting that. He was making him confused. But something in the beast's eyes was eager. Not hungry, just eager. As if waiting. A test, almost. A test even themselves didn't know about. Hiccup, with a leap of faith, closed his eyes dropped his head back and the other direction, letting his arm stay there, mid-air, blindly. Silence rang through his ears and sent his blood pumping. He could feel the rumbles from the Night Fury through the earth and feel the warm breath over his skin.

Toothless rested his snout in his hand.

Something happened. Something amazing. Thoughts tumbled like a whirlwind into Hiccup's mind and memories of a life that was not his - a dragon's - flashed before his eyes. A cloak of emotions wrapped around him. He almost choked, but found he couldn't speak. Everything was so beautiful. Pictures of mountains, of the sky and clouds, with the orange sky. More dragons of all species shifting with flapping wings and wiggling snouts. And there was death. A death of a loved one. His emotions sunk a moment, but it rose as he saw his own face, eyebrows stitched together and lips pursed into a concentrated look, bangs hanging down over his forehead. Then a joyful, curious expression. And he felt Toothless' curiousness and curiosity along with words of impression and instinct greeted him. Everything was almost brighter.

His eyes flew open and he stared at his hand pressed gently against Toothless' snout with spread fingers. _"Wow,"_ was all he could say.

And then Toothless opened his electric green eyes, pupils full of something with amazement. _"Wow."_
>Hiccup thought he'd said it at first, but his mouth wasn't open and a warm feeling spread throughout his body, as if the voice opened up something lying broken inside him to life. Hiccup blinked once.<p>

And then he screamed.

â€¦

Hiccup woke up to the sound of thumping footsteps. He sat still a moment, wondering why he couldn't feel the softness of his bed and the linen sheets. A warm breeze puffed over his face and he recoiled at the strong smell of smoke.

Wait, smoke?

At first he assumed he'd accidentally set something on fire â€“ maybe a house â€“ and got knocked out. Again, he stayed still, waiting for the blazes to consume him, but no flames licked at his skin. It wasn't even hot except for the slight heat that seemed to move around him. He groaned, fluttering his eyes open and willing himself to sit up.

"_Ugh, what happened?"_ he muttered, rubbing his head and squinted at the bright moon above him. Finding himself still in the confined of the cove, he whispered in confusion, "_Toothlessâ€¦?"_

"_Right here,"_ a gruff voice said, not deep but not high. He whirled around to only find Toothless sitting on his haunches behind him, ear flush against his head, looking like a curious cat more than anything.

"_W-Who said that?"_ he stuttered, hands flying to his face to brush away his hair.

"_I did."_

Heart jumping into his throat, he got to his knees.
"_What?"_

Toothless cocked his head forward as if trying to get his attention, rumbles coming from his throat. "_Must you be so confused?"_ the voice asked, sounding amused.

Realization came crashing down on him once again. "_W-What? __**Toothless?**_"

Toothless purred, lumbering towards him. "_That is my given name from you, yes."_ He sniffed him. "_Strange. How do you understand me?"_ His tongue flicked out and dragged against his cheek, something he didn't even care enough about to flinch away. "_No. You are not of sorcery. How are you speaking?"_

"_T-Toothless, what's going on?"_ he choked out, eyes wide. "_Howâ€¦How are youâ€¦"_

"_Speaking?"_

Hiccup nodded loosely.

"_I have always spoken,"_ Toothless said simply. "_You just couldn't understand me. No human can."_

He rubbed his palms over his thighs and pinched his arms. "_I'm crazy. I'm completely crazy,"_ he said hysterically. "_The village drove me nuts and made me think I can hear dragons."_

"_You aren't crazy,"_ Toothless â€“ no, Toothless couldn't speak. It had to beâ€¦the wind. Yes, the wind. "_You're the one who passed out."_

He blinked a moment. "_I passed out?"_ And then the memories rushed back to him all at once. His hand tingled from the recollection of being pressed against Toothless' snout and his thoughts ran rapid from remembering the beautiful pictures.

"_Iâ€¦I passed out,"_ he muttered nonchalantly, "_after I touched you."_

"_Yes,"_ Toothless said. "_You did. Can you tell me how you can understand me? Andâ€¦how you are speaking back?"_

His blood turned icy. "_What are you talking about?"_

Toothless' snout twitched. "_You saw my memories, didn't you?"_ His tail flicked, not waiting for an answer he already knew. "_Because I saw yours. You must have relived mine. That explains the speaking part, butâ€¦that doesn't say anything about how you can understand me."_

Hiccup stared at him. "_What in Hel's name are you going on about?"_

"_But that doesn't make senseâ€¦"_ Toothless went on, ignoring him. "_No mere human can understand us. Or relive memories. It's impossible."_

Hysteria built in Hiccup's chest. This couldn't be happening. He was crazy. Off his rocker. The insults must have gotten to him, or maybe

his uselessness, like a disease. Yes. He was still the same disease he'd always been. The disease must have spread somehow, sending him spiraling into his diseased mind.

"_This isn't real,"_ he whispered. "_This isn't real. Everyone was right. I'm completely insane. It sure took a while for it to kick in, but here it is."_ He wrung his hands together, biting his lip and the inside of his cheek so hard metallic crimson flooded over his taste buds. "_I'm cursed. Loki cursed me."_

Toothless stared at him for a moment. "_Do I smell blood?"_

Lips cracked open, blood dribbling down his chin, he said, "_No."_ He chewed harder. "_Gods, why am I even answering? It's not real."_

Toothless skirted over to him, muscles tense and eyes slit, ears working back and forth in panic. "_Hey. Hey! Stop! Hatchling, stop!"_

He stopped, watching blood trickle down onto his lap, and then to the ground.

Toothless' pupils widened out, heaving a large sigh. "_Stop. Don't do that."_ Hiccup gazed at him, feeling the completely real, smoky breath ghost over his face. "_I saw your memories as well, Hatchling. Is it those cruel humans that call you names and hurt you? They must be the reason for this."_ He nodded his head towards the red covering his chin and raw, chewed apart lips.

"_Iâ€¦"_

"_No need to speak; I have already felt your pain. They deserve death."_ His claws curled against the ground as he pressed his snout to Hiccup's forehead, lapping up the blood. "_You must have this treated."_

Hiccup stood stock still as the pink fleshy mass swept away the red, leaving a tingling sensation behind, like the bottom part of his face was buzzing. Toothless leaned away, looking proud with himself. "_That should heal up in a few minutes I believe."_

He wiped across his lips, finding no blood left, the throbbing already receding. "_Oh my God, this __**can't**_ _be real."_

"_I assure you it is," _Toothless said, ears twitching and staring at him curiously. "_But I'm afraid I'm just as confused as you."_

"_Y-You said I was speaking back," _Hiccup said, moving his bloodied fingers over his lips, feeling as he spoke. "_What are youâ€¦" _His eyes went as wide as dinner plates. "_No. __**No**__. What'sâ€¦What's happening? What in Hel's name am I doing?!"_

"_Oh no, don't have a tantrum again!"_ Toothless stressed, pressing forward. "_You said a word earlier today. Sky. That's what you said. That's an easy word, right? Just say that."_ He bobbed his head. "_S-K-Y."_

Hiccup fruitfully moved his mouth around the word, morphing it into

shapes to finally get the hang of each letter. "S-s-s-s-s-s k-k-k-k-k-k-k â€“y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y-yâ€¦" Moving around the lump in his throat was his loud scream earlier, he tried again, realizing he was easing back into it. "S-s-skyyy."

"_There. You see, yes? You have it."_ Toothless looked proud of himself, huffing once.

Hiccup wrapped his arms around himself, pulling his knees to his chest, muttering 'sky' until he had it perfectly. The feel of Norse on his tongue again comforted him, yet made him almost uneasy. Sighing in relief, he clung tighter to himself. "What'sâ€¦h-happening?"

"_This must be the Moon Goddess's work," _Toothless said, glancing up at the glowing, sliver moon like it would give him all the answers. Hiccup wished he could have them, too, though he didn't know who this Moon Goddess was. "_No human can __**understand**__. This doesn't make sense." _His eyes swiveled towards him. "_Your Sireâ€¦the leader of your flock, who was he mated to? I did not see her in your memories."_

Despite the shock of the situation, he picked at his pants as a heavy weight fell onto his chest. "She'sâ€¦dead, Toothless."

The dragon's neck cocked to the side, nose twitching. "_You are sad."_

Hiccup's eyes didn't leave the ground. "Well, she _is_ dead. She passed when she was having me, so technically it's my fault."

"_Is this what those wretched humans tell you?"_

Hiccup craned his neck back to look up at the sky. "Not necessarily." He breathed in deep, trying to expel that terrible feeling in his lungs. "This conversation took a turn. You're supposed to tell me why in Hel's name I can hear you."

"_But I already have." _He felt the weight of Toothless sink into the moist grass next to him, and the dragon's large head appeared in front of him, and Odin forbid, the creature was still making facial expression that he'd never noticed before. Was that part of the speaking thing? â€“ Toothless seemed more human than any of the Vikings back in the village, and that scared him. "_Are you stupid, Hatchling?"_

He snapped his gaze to him, taken aback. "What? No! I'm not stupid! If anything, you're stupid!"

For a second, he thought the dragon was going to breathe on him or something until he passed out from the smell of smoke â€“ could he die from that? He doubted it â€“ or sock him right in the face with his nose, which was bigger than the size of his head. At that thought, it seemed to grow on him how large Toothless actually was. He was a mere ant to be squashed, and Toothless would have no trouble doing it either. A stamp of his paw on his head would probably dig him fully into the ground and then he would be left for the crows. But Toothless only said, "_I may not hear your thoughts, but you are thinking thoughts of what you call 'stupid.'"_

"Thanks," he said dryly.

A curious look crossed the dragon's face, ears perking up and head cocked to the side, like a cat. "_You are brave to call me stupid, Hatchling. A higher insult would still be more respectful."_

"You're the one who called me stupid in the first place!"

"_I may call you whatever I like. You are a Hatchling; I am the King of Dragons."_

A feeling curled over his shoulders, bringing the weight back as he huffed shakily. "You'reâ€¦what?"

"_The King, of course," _Toothless said with confidence that had Hiccup in envy. "_You think I am but a simple dragon? I take that to offense if but a Hatchling thinks that. I am a gift from the Moon Goddess and the Earth God, created on the night of the meeting concerning __RagnarÃ¶k between the Gods of Dragon and Viking. It is not a lie when I was born from the physical form of lighting â€“ Thor's work, of course â€“ and the concept form of Death, with the help of Odin." _He turned his snout up. "_Titles mean magic, Hatchling. Take that into mind."_

_Then why in Hel's name is the __**King of fucking dragons**_ _being so nice to me? _"You were born from the God's."

"_Nothing the God's and a little magic can't do,"_ Toothless quipped. His nose wiggled again.

"Why do you keep doing that?" He pointed to his snout with a now-relaxed hand.

Toothless seemed to notice, nose still twitching towards him. "_I am smelling you."_

"_Why_ exactly?" he questioned.

"_I am smelling your emotions. Yours are very â€“ what do you call it? â€“ crazy. Haywire."_

He decided to let that slip. "So only you can smell emotions? Or does this have to do with me understanding you thing?

"_No. All dragons with healthy noses are able to."_

"So you're like other dragons?"

Toothless â€“ the King of all dragons â€“ _**sputtered**_. "_I am indeed a dragon unlike any other, but I am still a dragon! That is to say your emotions were very hard to transcribe, but I can smell them perfectly now."_

"That's very nice." Hiccup yawned widely, stretching his arms and arching his back. Feeling how exhausted he was, his eyes flew open. "Ah, Odin! I've been gone since â€“ damn it, I missed Training!"

"_Training?" _Toothless questioned. "_I would have never thought you trained. You're so small and clumsy. How do you work through

stealth?"_

"I'm not that â€“ " Hiccup sighed, realizing it was no use, because he was probably the clumsiest person not only in the village, but probably in the entire archipelago â€“ no, the world! "That's not what I meant. I'm pretty sure you're thinking of a different kind of 'training.' For Vikings, we have to go through Dragon Training to slay dragons â€“ well, we don't have to, but my dad kind of forced me, or I'm just a bit of a pushover, but that's beside the point â€“ "

"_I have heard of this 'Dragon Training' from my travels of another island near here," _Toothless said, cocking his head to the side, and Hiccup was just glad he wasn't mad at him for being trained to do what the dragon was probably supposed to stop. Well, he wasn't really being trained considering he can't do anything and all the dragons either left him alone or saved him from falling walls or approached him docile. Was he the only Viking that knew dragons weren't as violent or scary as everyone made them out to be? Toothless looked like a cat for Odin's sake! "_And youâ€¦wish to hurt dragons?"_

His hands flew up. "No! Not that all! Quite the opposite, really." He rubbed the back of his neck bashfully. "I've been tending to the dragons in the arena. I just make sure they get plenty of fish, because Thor knows the Vikings would just kill them if they got too weak and bring in more, and clean any serious wounds they have. There was a Nadder actually â€“ "

"_A Nadder!" _Toothless snarled suddenly, and Hiccup shrunk back in fear and hesitancy. "_I knew that was the scent of a Nadder on you that day!"_

"What day â€“ " Realization came over him. "Oh. The day you threw me into the pond. Yeah, by the way, thanks for that, I nearly caught hypothermia."

"_Her scent wasn't worthy enough to be on you, nowhere near!"_ The dragon's large wings flared in agitation and his teeth bared. "_She smelled of blood and the hostility of Vikings."_

"I _do_ live with Vikings, y'know."

"_They are unfit_."

Hiccup flexed his fingers curiously. "You make me sound like I'm a superior or something." Realizing what he was doing, he dropped his hands. "I feel weird."

The dragon snuffed the air. "_You areâ€¦tired?"_

"You can say that," he said quietly, eyes flicking towards the entrance of the cove. "Despite everything that's happened, I don't really want to go, but I have to. I'm going to be in enough trouble as it is; if I don't get some rest for tomorrow, they're going to kill me."

"_They cannot kill you,"_ Toothless said.

"Yeah. Okay." Hiccup got to his feet, suddenly realizing how tired he was from his knees shaking and the hitch in his breath. He stumbled a

moment as the blood rushed back to his legs, wobbling in place and wondering if he was going to fall. "C-Can you help me?"

Instead of Toothless coming forward to help him immediately, the dragon seemed almost suspicious of the question. After the moment of pressing his palm to his nose, Toothless seemed perfectly fine with touching him. Not eager, but fine. He'd brushed his head through his hair with his snout and ran his tongue over his face multiple times by now. It was a strange thing for Hiccup to think that Toothless was okay with _initiating_ the physical contact, but if he did, the Night Fury second guessed him into thinking he was against him.

"I'm not going to hurt you, y'know," he said after a moment of Toothless bouncing on his heels. He gestured to himself. "You have eyes. You can see me; I can't do any damage even if I wanted to."

Toothless stared at him with intense near-glowing green eyes before stepping forward and closing the small space between them and stretching out a silky black wing and nudging his arm across it so his forearm was lying skin to scale. He leaned on it, feeling the strong, rock hard muscles feather underneath the thick, leather-like skin. The shaking in his legs resided as he used the wing for leverage and walked over to the entrance. He let go, finding the tiredness in his thighs, but Toothless used the flat top of his head to bump against his back and bounce him up to the boulder, which surprised him.

Toothless leaned back down to the ground, eyes following him as he stood and peeked over the edge. "I will see you tomorrow," Hiccup decided to remind the dragon. He crouched down, knees next to his ears and fingertips brushing the chipping rock. "I don't know when."

"_Bring more fish,"_ Toothless called back up, tail swerving against the grass. "_For you, too. I do not like to share."_

"No kidding," he mumbled to himself, not even staying to find out if Toothless had heard him, leaving between the shadow-casted boulders and into the dark forest.

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6. Chapter 6

"_Dragonese"_

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Hiccup didn't really pay attention the next two weeks.

At least, not to his "Viking" life, not that he's a Viking. Dragon Training was a blur; he didn't notice anything that was going on. Gobber was livid when he'd skipped, but he hadn't heard him, not really. He didn't skip again after that, but he wasn't really there.

His thoughts were on Toothless and the arena dragons (Stormfly's injury had healed up nicely, but the scar seemed to piss her off whenever she preened).

Everything was a little bit lighter at the Cove.

Toothless was a harsh dragon, but seemed determined to keep him alive (probably so he didn't lose his only outlet to food) and rarely called him by his first name. He told him about The Earth God and Moon Goddess, the dragon's superiors they looked up to as a religion, just like Odin and Freya.

It was one day that he'd been caught stealing fish.

Toothless was big, and he needed a lot of food to keep his strength up. While sometimes he brought bread to Raven's Point, the Night Fury wouldn't eat it. He seemed relied on solely fish; cod, salmon, and trout alike, it didn't really matter to him, though Hiccup hadn't even brought any chickens or parts of yak they kept for the winter due to someone noticing. He was hungrier on certain days than others, but he didn't really say anything about it, being the King of Dragons and all.

He was sneaking off the fishing boat that had been filled up that morning, giant sack on his back. Luckily the boat didn't stay on the bank at the front of Berk â€“ where all the warships were â€“ but rather on the side where they'd set sail every morning to catch. So it was relatively easy to slip by without being noticed, though if a couple people saw them, they usually just rolled their eyes, thinking he was carrying around some parts for another "death trap."

He hopped off the side of the boat, wobbling on the bank for a moment as it creaked from the weight. He was halfway there by a large chicken coop when someone grunted behind him and said, "Hicca'?"

He yelped in surprise, tripping over a leg on the coop and falling backwards over the small fence and smashing his body over a bunch of chickens that scampered away, squawking. Bucket stood over him, looking surprised and as dim-witted as ever.

"Bucket!" he snapped, picking himself up into a sitting position. "What in Hel's name was that for?"

"Oh my, sorry, Hicca'!" Bucket exclaimed, seeming horrified with what he'd done. He was the only one in Hiccup's life that hadn't said a bad thing towards him (besides Fishlegs, but Fishlegs hadn't said _anything_ to him since they were seven) not even once, not even when he just nearly killed his chickens â€“ which wasn't _really_ his fault, but anyone else would have blamed him either way. "I didn't mean any harm!"

"Yeah, yeah," he sighed, looking back to the sack that had slipped off his shoulders and to his elbows. Half the fish towards the top had slid out onto the grass, lifelessly. He felt frustration build up in his throat and he groaned. "_I hate my life."_

"Don't growl at me, Hicca', I didn't mean to," Bucket said, almost whining. "It was an accident; I just wanted to ask what you were doing."

Even though he was fifteen and had spoken better Norse than any other Viking residing on Berk, Hiccup still had to move his jaw a bit to form the words. It was a process. Speaking Dragon was almost easier, and it sure as Hel was easier to slip into, unlike Norse, which he had to think about with immense concentration. Dragonese was just a series of growls and chirps and cackles that elongated with the longer the sentence and the stronger the emotion. It was quite hard for Hiccup to understand, so that was what he stuck with, just so he didn't confuse himself further. "I-_IIIIIII_ am s-sorry, Buâ€¦Bucket. I didn't mean t-to growl at you."

Bucket didn't seem to care about his growls a few seconds earlier and his apology less so. "Why do ya have all that fish?"

"Ohâ€¦this?" Hiccup glanced back to the fish, biting the inside of his cheek, where the raw flesh had healed up. "I'm justâ€¦hungry?"

Bucket's bushy eyebrows scrunched together. "But, Hiccup!" He elongated the pronunciation of his name. "You're so small, I've never seen you eat anything more than a chicken leg!"

Hiccup smiled weakly, feeling the fakeness on his face. "I'm just, uh, saving up. The winter is coming, after all."

"Ah, little one, you should be more social! You _are_ a good one, after all." Bucket scratched his head where it met his helmet, looking around as if trying to remember something, mumbling under his breath about some house and cat â€“ whatever that meant.

Hiccup turned and began shifting the fish back into the sack, feeling his face heat up from the compliment, something foreign to him, even though it wasn't really a large praise. "Yeah. Okay."

Bucket didn't notice his shortness in words (no one ever did). He looked back at him, then to the fish. "That is a fair rack of cod you got. I wouldn't be stealin' anymore after this." He leaned forward, cupping his hand around his mouth as if sharing a secret, even though no one was around to hear. "Someone might get suspicious."

Hiccup slipped the clip back over the top of the sack and hefted it on his shoulder, and, feeling his back bend and his legs shake a bit from the weight, he shifted around to get his feet into control before he fell over. Bucket was looking at him, that same blank expression he always wore still on his face. It made Hiccup uneasy, almost. He nodded once, giving the Viking a small smile. "Thanks for the advice, Bucket. I didn't mean to disturb you fromâ€¦whatever you were doing."

"Oh!" Bucket exclaimed. "I've been looking for Whiskers. Have you seen 'er?"

"Is that a new pet?"

"Why yes, she is."

Hiccup shook his head in amusement and honesty. "No, Bucket. I haven't seen yourâ€¦cat, I assume?"

"Yeah, a great feline, too," Bucket purred in pride. "She's a nice

one with golden fur and big blue eyes. You'd let me know if ye saw her, right?"

"Of course," Hiccup answered. He almost bounced on his toes, wanting to get to the forest and spend as much time in the cove as he could before dusk. Training was already wearing down on his shoulders, and he wanted to leave the village as long as he could to get away from everyone. Toothless was an exception, considering he was a _dragon_ he could literally _speak to_ â€“ and not in his own language. The thought still baffled him. "I'll see you around then. I've got to goâ€¦finish some stuff."

"Okay. And be careful with those inventions of yours; we don't want you getting hurt, do we now?"

Hiccup turned away from the docks and hurried to the forest.

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Toothless trotted up to him, snuffing the air. As soon as he got off one strap, the basket was knocked to the grassy ground that had been stomped on with clawed Night Fury and light human prints. The Cove was getting more different as the days passed by. The claw marks from Toothless's first escape trials were old and forgotten by Hiccup. The grass was beginning to wear down, and all the fish in the pond were either dead in the bottom or gone, eaten by Toothless. Hiccup would bring live fish, but they would die by the time he trudged all the way from the docks to the water. It would have helped them a lot, but he knew that trial â€“ unlike Toothless's â€“ were just plain stupid to try, especially with the risk of causing even more suspicion with anyone would who notice him, and, dare he say it, Bucket.

He sat down by the murky water, knees curled to his chest. He hoped it would rain soon, he knew it would. Maybe the sloshy mud would erode away and the grass could grow a bit more instead of being stamped on constantly. Hiccup liked the grass long and a lively bright green. It was the complete opposite of the village's brown, crusty plants that had been trampled by boots and animals and ripped away by angered dragons during raids. It was something small, and the small things were what made life a little bit easier for Hiccup. It was just grass. But it seemed like more. He was crazy.

"_Hatchling," _Toothless said in a tone that was like a parent scolding their child. "_Have you eaten anything today?"_

Hiccup glanced back to the few raw fish left lying dead in the grass, the rest already in Toothless's stomach. He still wasn't very fond of _anything_ raw, unless it was jerky. And even then he only liked yak. "I'm not really that hungry," he said, hoping that was enough for the dragon.

"_Eat this." _The dragon picked up a cod by its tail with his teeth and tossed it over to him with a swing of his neck. Hiccup looked at it when it stopped sliding to rest beside him.

"Toothless, I thought you would have figured it out by now; I don't like raw fish."

"_Such disrespect. I know you don't like it, but why would you pass

up edible food like that? It is food. You are lucky to have someone hunt it for you; you should take it while you have it,"_ Toothless said, nudging the empty sack away with his hind leg, as if to signify he was finished. Hiccup avoided his toxic green eyes and made a face at the fish. Toothless huffed a breath, sitting down next to the fish, which seemed to be their self-proclaimed barrier between them. Toothless still didn't want to touch him much; and if he could help it, at all. It was a bit frustrating. "_You are such a tiny thing. No meat on your bones. No scales to protect yourself. The only thing keeping you away from your death is that fur you wear."_

Hiccup stuck his chin up, something he found Toothless liked to do. He patted the breast of his fur coat. "It's what keeps me from getting cold. It's not doing anything to help from me _dying_ unless it's too cold to be without proper shelter."

"_So keeping you away from your death."_

"Whatever."

The Night Fury scooted the fish closer to him with a long, curled claw that was the size of Hiccup's wrist before drawing back before he could get 'too close'. "_Eat."_

Hiccup gave him an unamused look. "I'm not hungry."

"_Yes, you are," _Toothless said back indignantly.

In truth, Hiccup _was_ hungry. He just wasn't used to practically being fed by anyone, much less a dragon. He was left like a big boy to go get his own stew or chicken from the Mead Hall since his father came home late or was out looking for the nest. He'd been doing it since he was eight, it was normal for him, though he didn't go as much when he first started fending for himself. It was terrifying to be nearly crushed by the towering, intimidating Vikings that tromped around for their own meal or mead to get drunk off their minds with their friends. So he was on the brink of death from lack of food until he found a way to sneak into through the back of the butchers or the sailing boats to steal something he could cook on his own. He had to give himself some credit: he could sure adapt.

"You're treating me like a child," he said, scrunching up his nose.

"_You __**are**_â€¦_a Hatchling,"_ Toothless said slowly, as if trying to get him to understand with his incompetent mind. "_If you don't eat, then you will wither into nothing."_

It was ironic to say that, considering the circumstances (in many ways). Hiccup felt the warmness steal his ears in embarrassment and frustration, but he grabbed the fish by the thick tail, cradling it in front of his face. _Look on the bright side, _he thought to himself, _at least it isn't decaying. _That thought grossed him out even more and he quickly pushed it out of his head. Glancing between the dark beast next to him and the food, he whined out pathetically as a last resort, "Can't you just, like, cook it with your breath or something?"

Toothless's ears flapped. "_I assure you, I don't think any mortal being can cook something with their breath."_

"I'm being serious," Hiccup said, trying not to pout as he held the fish up to the dragon's snout. "Blow on it with fire. Cook it. Burn it. I don't care. I just don't like it raw. It'sâ€¦gross."

"_You should be grateful for food to eat. Even if it's 'gross'." _Toothless made a sound that was definitely defiant. "_And besides, my fire is not like other dragons; it's made of flames and lightning. I'm sure you don't want to consume pure lightning. I don't think it would be very healthy, more fatal than anything."_

"Eating a raw fish isn't healthy for humans," Hiccup decided to point out.

"_Neither is lightning." _Toothless snorted through his nostrils. "_And besides, you're a hatchling. Hatchling's need the food of a hatchling. So eat up."_

Hiccup brought the fish back to his chest, defeated. "You're not going to let this go, are you?"

"_No."_

So he sighed and once again endured eating a raw fish. He cringed when he felt the molding scales and flesh slither down his throat. Toothless watched him curiously, smacking his lips like he did the first time he had eaten it. Hiccup tried to mock him by squishing out his cheeks with the meat, but he nearly choked and ended up in a coughing fit.

"_You should be more careful eating before you suffocate," _Toothless informed, tail swishing back and forth behind them.

"I was trying toâ€¦ugh, never mind." Hiccup threw the uneaten fins and bones into the pond, not wanting to look at them for one more second or he'd throw up. He could feel it filling up his stomach, and he couldn't quite get the bland aftertaste off his taste buds. While raw fish wasn't entirely unbearable, it was still disgusting. And Hiccup wondered if Toothless expected him to get used to that taste.

Toothless didn't exactly force feed him over the past two weeks. The dragon told him that, since he could sniff out certain emotions, he could detect physical feelings as well, and one of hunger. Hiccup had been trying to eat as much as he could even though it was never enough to get him to be what his dad wanted him to be, but it was good enough to keep him alive and he was perfectly okay with that. Though Toothless didn't seemed too happy.

After a brief silence of Hiccup glowering at the Night Fury, albeit with no real punch to it, Toothless finally asked, "_How is this 'Dragon Training' going?"_

Oh, that. Toothless seemed very interested about his training (if he could even call it that). While Hiccup quickly changed the topic whenever it popped up, he did remind him that no, he didn't want to have any intention to hurt dragons, and he only ever did because he wanted to be accepted by his village and, more importantly, his father, and yes, he did go in without a fight because there was no arguing with his dad because he would open his ears anyway. And yes,

he wasn't even on the island, but his teacher wouldn't let him see the light of day if he ever skipped it purposefully again.

Toothless didn't seem to like his father. Or Gobber.

Or anyone for that matter.

Maybe he should feel a bit flattered or special that the dragon actually let him near him (though he rarely touched him except to get a snuff of his hair every once and awhile) or relatively in his presence. Toothless didn't mind at all to remind him that he _was _the King of Dragons, mortally of course. He was a bit stuck up in Hiccup's opinion, but who wouldn't brag if he was the head of an entire species of beasts that could trample over anything in an instant?

And while Toothless either shot off an insult to get rid of the people he talked about or just ignored the topic altogether, he let him stay there in the Cove, right next to him. Anyone he knew would immediately try to kill him, and he practically galloped through the woods every day like a work horse to bring food to the dragon, and he quite liked it, because Toothless didn't judge, he didn't push, and he didn't hurt him.

"Fine," he said shortly. He didn't like talking about it much at all either. Dragon Training was a drag that kept him from doing what he wanted to do: stay in the Cove for hours with Toothless, quickly feed and check any wounds on the arena dragons, and work a little on his inventions. Training really was a bust since all the teens, including himself, were all inexperienced idiots (_not like they were at fault considering the people they live around, _Hiccup thought).

Everything at first was just getting the feel of the kill ring and quite literally almost getting killed, and then they all had to 'study' and 'research' history, rate of danger, and skills of each dragon, even the rare ones. This happened every few days after working physically with the dragons, each day trying to figure out a better way to slide away and finding the best way to attack. Nobody really studied, of course. Hiccup didn't even want to think about it; he hadn't opened the Dragon Manuel in years.

He considered every morning just running into the woods and not coming back until he had to get food to live. But they would send a search party. And Gobber would be seriously pissed at him for trying to 'kill himself' again by lack of food, not that he really meant it, and skipping Training.

"_Speak normally," _Toothless said nonchalantly.

Hiccup looked at him curiously. "What do you mean?"

Toothless rolled his eyes (something he did rather oftenâ€¦more like all the time). "_Dragon."_

"Oh." Hiccup didn't really mind, considering it felt a bit weird speaking back something completely different to something else that was so foreign and normal to him now. "_Dragon."_

"_Yes, yes," _Toothless rolled. "_Now tell me."_

"_I've told you before Toothless," _Hiccup sighed. "_Training isâ€¦training. It's stupid and boring."_

"_Not all training is stupid and boring," _Toothless huffed. "_Is yourâ€¦teacher still sending you and the other uncivilized humans in to get mauled?"_

Hiccup couldn't help but crack a small smile at that. "_I don't think he's intentionally sending us to get killed, Toothless. That's just Gobber's way of teaching. Everyone's different."_

Once again, like always, Toothless changed the subject, this time with a roll of his eyes. "_And what of this â€“ " _Toothless's snout cringed in disgust " â€“ _Stormfly?"_

"_She's not the only dragon that's caged in the arena," _Hiccup said for nearly the hundredth time since he'd told the dragon her name. "_There's Meatlug and Barf and Belch and Hookfang."_

"_You choose the most unique horrid names," _Toothless decided to pipe in. "_Mine is the best out of all them."_

Hiccup barked a laugh. "_Would you be jealous if I gave you a worse name? What would it be â€“ Snowflake? Big Giant Beetle?"_

"_I still don't believe those are worse than 'Barf' and 'Belch.'"_

"_So you want me to call you Snowflake for now on?" _Hiccup couldn't help but tease.

Toothless's eyes widened, and his tail flicked faster for a moment. "_Not really. No."_

It's the simplest of words that made Hiccup crack up into giggles, especially when they came from the maw of the King of Dragons. He fell to his side, curling in one himself as he laughed with his stomach, something he hadn't done since he was a kid. It felt nice to laugh freely. But he did notice when Toothless nearly jumped out of his skin when his shaggy hair brushed against the scales of his foreleg. His laughter died with that, realizing how comfortable he was with one â€“ if not the most â€“ dangerous beings ever, while the very being still hopped away when he came close. It was sad, and Hiccup realized then how much he was right about Toothless reflecting himself, because he did the same exact thing when anyone in the village came up to him directly.

He sat back up, crossing his legs and facing Toothless, who watched him curiously. "_I know I'm in Dragon Training,"_ he said, choosing his words carefully, "_but that doesn't mean I want to hurt you."_

Toothless watched him with those same unnerving eyes that were being less unnerving every day. His ears flapped against the side of his head, wings giving a flutter, everything that kept the dragon moving, which he seemed to be constantly doing, no matter what. It reminded Hiccup of himself; it was another thing that reminded him of himself.

He could see the hesitancy in Toothless's expression. The way his eyes were narrowed only on the outer corner, pupils still large, a feather of confused impulse twitches in the constant movements of his head. "_Iâ€¦see," _the dragon said finally, then seemed to decide he didn't like his words. "_Know. I know."_

"_I'm not a Viking," _Hiccup told him.

"_I definitely know that," _Toothless said with a small coat of humor. His ears twitched again. "_It's justâ€¦strange."_

"_I am a strange person."_

Toothless shook his head, like shaking off something that was sitting upon his nose, and said, "_Not in that way. Humans are cruel creatures. They do nothing but harm our kind. Iâ€¦am not sure why you aren't. Why you don't want to."_

Hiccup didn't know the answer either. He'd never felt the compulsive desire to go kill beasts like all the other Vikings had said they had. He was kind of a pacifist, rather wanting to stay inside to work on some dreamed-up invention than running around and swinging axes and hammers. And the closer he got with dragon-kind, the more he realized that dragonsâ€¦didn't really want to fight. Not entirely, at least.

It felt like a confliction even though it wasn't, so Hiccup only shrugged his shoulders, not wanting Toothless to get overwhelmed with his overthought thinking. "_I've never really wanted to. It feelsâ€¦wrong. Dragons are living things, not something someone else to go around killing. It's sick."_

Toothless gave him a look of almost loathing, but then he realized it wasn't loathing, it was thick with hidden gratitude. "_At leastâ€¦" _the dragon said slowly, "_there's __**something**_ _that sees the truth in truthful things."_

The words rang, unfinished. But Hiccup didn't point that out, of course.

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file.